

REMARKS

Favorable reconsideration of this application, in view of the following comments and as presently amended, is respectfully requested.

A new Abstract is submitted by the present response that does not exceed 150 words.

Claims 18-45 are pending this application. Claims 34-45 are added by the present response. Claims 18-33 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as anticipated by U.S. patent 5,625,757 to Kageyama et al. (herein "Kageyama"). Claims 18, 20, 21, 26, 28, and 29 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as anticipated by U.S. patent 5,768,516 to Sugishima. Claims 19 and 27 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Sugishima in view of U.S. patent 5,991,846 to Ooki. Claims 22-25 and 30-33 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Sugishima in view of U.S. patent 5,727,135 to Webb.

Addressing now each of the above-noted rejections, those rejections are traversed by the present response.

It is initially noted that each of independent Claims 18 and 26 is amended by the present response to clarify a feature recited therein. Specifically, those claims now clarify the structure of the server by reciting that the server stores "a graphic layout of an operation panel of the all of the plurality of image forming apparatuses connected to said computer network" and further configured to store information items of all of the plurality of image forming apparatuses connected to said computer network", as specifically recited in independent Claim 18; independent Claim 26 now recites a similar limitation.

That subject matter is fully supported by the original specification at page 16, lines 1-2, and at page 16, line 19 *et seq.* Such a structure as clarified in the claims is believed to clearly distinguish over the applied art.

First with respect to the applied art to Kageyama, Kageyama discloses a device in Figure 1 that includes plural printers 17, 18, 19 and plural servers 14, 15, and 16. Kageyama does not disclose or suggest utilizing “a server” that stores the claimed two specific types of information, including both a “graphic layout of an operation panel of all of the plurality of image forming apparatuses connected to said computer network”, and “information items of all of the plurality of image forming apparatuses connected to said computer network”.

In the invention as recited in the claims, and with reference to Figure 1 in the present specification as a non-limiting example, server 1 stores the above-noted information for all of the image forming apparatuses connected to the network. Kageyama fails to teach or suggest such subject matter.

Further, Kageyama does not describe features for storing information associated with image forming conditions and functions inherent to individual image forming apparatuses connected to a computer network. Image forming conditions and functions are, as non-limiting examples, such as shown in Figures 4, 6, 8, and 9 of the present specification.

In such ways, each of amended Claims 18 and 26, and the claims dependent therefrom, patentably distinguish over the teachings in Kageyama.

With respect to the teachings in Sugishima, Sugishima also fails to teach or suggest the above-noted features. It is particularly noted that computer 10 in Sugishima is not disclosed as storing “a graphic layout of an operation panel of all of the plurality of image forming apparatuses connected to said computer network” and as additionally storing “information items of *all of* the plurality of image forming apparatuses connected to said computer network” (emphasis added).

Further, Sugishima describes an auto and an individual selection as printer selection modes. In the individual selection the list of printers is displayed, which is stored in the

external memory in the form as shown in Figure 4 of Sugishima. However, Sugishima does not describe a feature for retrieving, i.e., searching, image forming apparatuses that fit a user demand for a document to be printed and displaying the results of the retrieving to select a desired image forming apparatus. Further, in the auto mode Sugishima appears to perform a function for searching for an appropriate image forming apparatus, but subsequently causes the searched image forming apparatus to automatically output the document. Sugishima, however, does not disclose a feature for allowing a user to select a desired image forming apparatus based on the list of the printers displayed.

Thus, independent Claims 18 and 26, and the claims dependent therefrom, also patentably distinguish over the teachings in Sugishima.

Moreover, no teachings in Ooki or Webb are believed overcome the above-noted deficiencies in Sugishima.

Ooki at most teaches a function of displaying a location of printers after completion of printer selection. In one feature of the current claims the list of printers can be displayed from the retrieving, i.e., searching, results to allow a user to select a desired image forming apparatus from the list of printers. Ooki does not appear to describe such a function. Therefore, even if combined with Sugishima a user could not use a location information to select a desired printer in the case when, for example, a user wishes to print a document on a closest printer for convenience.

Moreover, Sugishima describes a storage of functional information with reference to Figure 4, which includes functions such as output size, resolution, etc., but not location of the printer since the location of the printer is not a function. Therefore, there also appears to be no motivation to apply the location of the printer described in Ooki to the functional information described in Sugishima.

With respect to Webb, Webb appears to allow a remote user to view an operation panel of a remote printer. However, there does not appear to be any technical relationship between the teachings in Sugishima and Webb, and thus there could be no motivation to one of ordinary skill in the art to combine the teachings in those references. Thereby, no further teachings in Ooki or Webb can overcome the above-noted deficiencies in Sugishima.

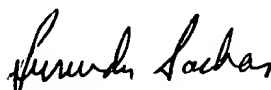
The present response also sets forth new Claims 34-45 for examination. New Claims 34-45 are also believed to be allowable for similar reasons as discussed above.

In such ways, each of the pending claims is believed to be patentably distinguish over the applied art.

As no other issues are pending in this application, it is respectfully submitted that the present application is now in condition for allowance, and it is hereby respectfully requested that this case be passed to issue.

Respectfully submitted,

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Marked-Up Copy
Serial No: <u>09/438,515</u>
Amendment Filed on: _____

IN THE CLAIMS

--18. (Amended) A network control system comprising:

a computer network;

a plurality of image forming apparatuses connected to said computer network, each image forming apparatus configured to record an image on a recording paper;

a server connected to said computer network and configured to store a graphic layout of an operation panel of all of the plurality of image forming apparatuses connected to said computer network and further configured to store information items of all of the plurality of image forming apparatuses connected to said computer network;

a computer connected to said computer network, comprising,

a computer display configured to display the graphic layout and the information items stored in the server, and

an input device configured to input data into the computer, said computer configured to select said image forming apparatus for recording the image which is provided by said computer by an operator selecting the information items displayed on the computer display.

26. (Amended) A network control system comprising:

computer network means;

a plurality of image forming means connected to said computer network means, each image forming means for recording an image on a recording paper;

server means connected to said computer network means for storing a graphic layout of an operation panel of all of the plurality of image forming means connected to said computer network means and further configured to store information items of all of the plurality of image forming means connected to said computer network means;

computer means connected to said computer network means, comprising,

display means for displaying the graphic layout and the information items stored in the server means, and

input means for inputting data into the computer means, said computer means selecting said image forming means for recording the image which is provided by said computer means by an operator selecting the information items displayed on the display means.--

Claims 34-45 (New).

IN THE ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

Abstract (New).